

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season, Quota Ranges and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species. This happens every other year between December and final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the Commission, FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2016 and 2017 bighorn sheep season, structure changes include changing the requirement for presenting harvested sheep in the region it was harvested to presenting it to FWP anywhere in the state except for Region 6 and the unlimited districts, removing the Gallatin Special Management Area closed area, adjustments to quotas and quota ranges, and re-opening the Beartooth WMA – Gates of the Mountains HD 455 with one either-sex license.

All proposed changes are in the Commission Master List for the December meeting.

FWP is proposing no changes to those adopted in December.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Bighorn sheep season comments were received during scoping and included comments about drawing odds. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received 32 comments that spoke to once in a lifetime, in favor of eliminating the Gallatin Special Management Area, predators, seeking more opportunity, and options for increased opportunity suggestions in specific HDs. All comments are included in the Commission packet.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals was included in the Dec. 10th Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 11th Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the final 2016 and 2017 Bighorn Sheep Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP. I also move to adopt all other portions of the previous 2014-2015 bighorn sheep season regulations not affected by the Commission's actions today.